

June 27, 2006

Arizona Health-e Connection Builds Momentum State Receives Federal Grant to Develop E-Health Strategies

Arizona was recently awarded a federal grant to explore privacy and security issues related to e-Health. The grant provides resources to assess business practices that affect the safe exchange of interoperable electronic health information. Based on this assessment, the Arizona Health-e Connection will identify practical methods to enable the electronic exchange of health information.

The Health-e Connection is part of a national movement to use technology to increase efficiency, improve quality of care, and reduce the cost of providing health care. An important factor in the success of the Health-e Connection is the public's confidence that their data will be secure.

"Making sure that patient's health information is kept safe is of paramount importance in the development of e-Health," said Beth Schermer Co-Chair of the Health-e Connection Steering Committee. "This grant will give Arizona the resources necessary to begin to sort out the privacy and security laws and how they impact e-Health."

This grant is a major step in the implementation of the [*Health-e Connection Roadmap*](#), developed as a result of Governor Napolitano's [*Executive Order 2025*](#). The *Roadmap* outlines a 5-year path for the electronic exchange of health records in the State. It was developed with input from over 300 stakeholders in the health care industry. The process used in creating the *Roadmap* is nationally recognized as the model for the development of e-Health plans.

There are several teams working on various aspects of *Roadmap* implementation, including a team focusing on privacy and security. The twelve month duration of the grant coincides with the transition process from *Roadmap* development to implementation.

The grant is funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, administered by RTI international in partnership with the National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices. In exchange for the grant, the State will share its research and best practices with other states and the Federal government.

The following activities are planned in conjunction with the grant:

- An examination of relevant federal and state laws relating to security and privacy of health information.
- Identification of legal challenges to implementing an electronic health information exchange.

- Development of solutions and creation of an implementation plan to address business practices along with state and federal laws to permit health information exchange.